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Witch or angel, it was all one to him. The English and their party believed that the treacherous spirits to whom she had sold herself had betrayed her into their hands, that she might meet the punishment which the age regarded as suited to such a crime. The leaders possibly regarded her condemnation as necessary to justify their own claims in opposing the heir of Charles VI. But die she must. If the charge of witchcraft failed, it was possible to catch the ignorant peasant girl in the toils of a long prosecution and condemn her as a heretic. From the moment therefore in which she fell into the enemy's hands, a condemnation upon the heinous charge of dealing with evil spirits and a cruel death were foregone conclusions.

The book, as has been stated, is not a history, but a biography. It is perhaps to be regretted that an author who has proved himself so capable and so judicious in the handling of difficult sources has not allowed himself a wider field. Good books in English upon continental subjects are rare. The epoch of French history, in which Joan of Arc is, after all, only an episode, is worthy of such an author as Mr. Lowell. In the appendix (A), he reviews the reign of Charles VII. in discussing the character of that monarch. This, with the introductory chapter, is all that he has seen fit to attempt in presenting the larger subject. As a piece of historical biography, the *Joan of Arc* is, without extravagance, one of the best books put forth by the American press for some time.

BENJAMIN S. TERRY.

Lorenzo de' Medici, and Florence in the Fifteenth Century. By E. ARMSTRONG, M.A., Fellow of Queen's College, Oxford. (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1896. Pp. xiv, 449.)

THE constant improvement in the character of our historical manuals is a source of satisfaction to every student, for it frequently happens nowadays that little books for the many are written by those who are well qualified to furnish big books for the few. Mr. Armstrong's work belongs to the best of its class. It is scholarly and judicious in its arrangement, and is written *con amore* by one familiar with the most approved historical methods. The best secondary sources have been used, controlled, we may infer, by a considerable knowledge of the chief primary authorities. Thus while the author modestly refuses all claim to original research, even the special student will find much to attract him in the compact logical presentation and the thoughtful observations of the writer.

Mr. Armstrong adheres closely to his subject, which is Florence under Lorenzo, not the Renaissance in Italy. We are thus spared all trite general reflections such as too often form the stock in trade of writers on this period. The treatment is philosophical in the best sense of the word. Definite comparisons with familiar modern conditions are substituted for the usual vague formulæ which assume to supply a single explanation for a whole civilization. Resemblances rather than differences are emphasized; but

one which the writer has missed and which will readily occur to the American reader is the analogy between the political "boss" of the fifteenth and of the nineteenth century.

The causes of the supremacy of the Medici form the logical introduction to our book. The intricate constitutional conditions, the multiform historical survivals, — for the creation of new magistracies did not imply the destruction of the old, — all these are described with remarkable clearness, considering the obscurity of the subject. Lorenzo was a party leader, and his power was maintained by methods part of which were peculiar to Florence, but some of which will appear strangely familiar to those who follow the career of the successful contemporaneous "politicians." The element of popular elections was of course practically unknown in Florence, but patronage then as now was the mainstay of the "boss." Taxation, which Cosimo "plied as other tyrants would the dagger," could be used against individual opponents in a way that is no longer possible. Of the financial measures of Lorenzo, Mr. Armstrong gives us an especially interesting account.

The permanence of tenure of the Medici as compared with the similarly unofficial English premier, the writer ascribes to several causes. "The spoils system was in Florence much more complete ; a party once in power had far more means of rewarding adherents. But chiefly the reason was the entire absence of elections in the modern sense. . . . The drawing by lot, the insignificance of the individual magistrate, the rapid rotation of offices, deprived the actual election to the magistrates of all significance. There was no natural and definite moment at which discontent with the administration could make itself vocal." Thus revolution was the only means of ejecting the ruling party.

In his account of the literary and artistic tendencies of the time, Mr. Armstrong is no whit less happy than in describing constitutional and financial conditions. He confines himself to the art and literature as connected with Lorenzo, and in this way enhances the value of his work for those already familiar with the general development of Italian art. "Botticelli was the truest artistic counterpart of the literary tendencies of his day and more especially of those of his chief patron." To him Mr. Armstrong turns for the most characteristic expression of this transitional epoch in art, and his unaffected analysis of the charms of this now so popular painter are full of suggestion and good sense. The choice of less common, but historically important, illustrations forms an admirable feature of the book.

JAMES HARVEY ROBINSON.

Lectures on the Council of Trent. Delivered at Oxford, 1892-1893, by JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE, late Regius Professor of Modern History. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1896. Pp. 294.)

THIS course of lectures is really a critical history of the Reformation, considered as a movement towards the goal of a reformed and reunited